Getting help for mental health

About one in five Americans live with a mental health condition. If you or someone you know is struggling, it's important to know that help is available.

Your mental health matters

Mental health is your overall mental well-being. It's shaped by your life experiences, relationships, physical health, family health history, and environment.

Mental illnesses, including depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, can affect how you feel and think and can make it hard to complete everyday tasks. If you're dealing with mental health issues or illness, you are not alone.

Getting help in an emergency

If you or someone you know needs help right away, call 9-1-1. You can also reach out to:

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.** Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or use the Lifeline Chat online at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.
- **Crisis Text Line.** Text "HOME" to 741741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

How to get help

Talk to your health care provider. Mention your mental health concerns at your next health care visit or call to schedule an appointment. Your health care provider knows you and your medical history and can help you find a mental health professional.

Before your visit:

- Think about what you want to talk about, including the specific symptoms you've been having.
- Bring a list of any medications you're taking.
- Find out about your family's mental health history if you can.

If it makes you more comfortable, you can ask someone you trust to come with you to the appointment. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) has tips for talking to your provider about your mental health concerns.

Find treatment near you. You don't need to have health insurance to get support. There are federal resources and local organizations in your community that can help you find qualified providers and services.

- **Contact the HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.** Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357), text 435748 (HELP4U), call TTY 1-800-487-4889, or visit findtreatment.samhsa.gov to find local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.
- **Find a health center.** Health centers offer community-based primary health care, including mental health treatment. Your local health center can help you find services and treatment. Find a Health Center near you.
- **Check out FindTreatment.gov**. Visit FindTreatment.gov to learn about different kinds of treatment options and find a treatment facility in your area.

For more resources and information about getting help for mental illness, visit the NIMH Find Help page.

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Different kinds of treatment

When it comes to mental health, there's no "one size fits all" treatment. A trained mental health professional can help you address your mental health concerns and improve your mental well-being. There are different kinds of mental health professionals, and it's important to find someone who has the right expertise and helps you feel comfortable. You and your provider should work together to find the treatment or combination of treatments that will work best for you.

Depending on your situation, history, biology, and preferences, your treatment plan might include:

- **Psychotherapy.** Psychotherapy (or talk therapy) is a kind of treatment that helps you identify harmful emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, and learn how to change them. To find out more about talk therapy, visit Psychotherapies from NIMH.
- **Medication.** Medications may help you manage some symptoms and can be an important part of the overall treatment plan. Medications sometimes work best in combination with therapy. To find out more, visit Mental Health Medications from NIMH.
- **Brain stimulation therapy.** Brain stimulation therapies use electricity to change how the brain works. Read more about Brain Stimulation Therapies from NIMH.

Mental health care providers may offer services in person or online (telemental health). Check out Telemental Health from NIMH to learn more about telemental health and how to find a virtual provider.

Get support

Support groups can be a great way to connect with other people who are dealing with similar issues. You can find support groups online or join one in your local community.

- **Contact the NAMI HelpLine**. Call 800-950-NAMI (6264) or visit www.nami.org/help to connect with volunteers across the country and get support, information, and resources.
- **Visit Mental Health America**. Visit www.mhanational.org/find-support-groups for a directory of mental health peer support programs.

Remember, you're not in this alone. Help is available. ■

WHEN TO GET HELP

Recognizing when you don't feel like yourself is the first step. If you're experiencing any of these symptoms and they don't go away after a few weeks, it might be time to reach out for help:

- Feeling sad, hopeless, or irritable
- Experiencing anxiety that doesn't go away (this can include feeling tense, nervous, or restless, and having a rapid heart rate)
- Losing interest in activities you used to enjoy
- Having low energy, feeling sluggish or tired
- Problems with sleep (not getting enough sleep or sleeping too much)
- Changes in appetite and weight
- Thinking about hurting yourself

Asking for help may feel challenging, especially if you've never worked with a mental health professional before. But it's the best way to get the support you need.

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